

The Implications of Weapons of Mass Destruction For Peacekeeping Operations

White Paper

Alan Shaw

DTRA/ASCO

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Overview

The threat of chemical or biological weapons as instruments of warfare or of terrorism has been a topic of increasing concern for about a decade. The possibility that similar means of mass destruction could be encountered during peace keeping operations has received comparatively little attention. This paper asks whether that topic is worthy of closer attention, and concludes that it is. The possibility that chemical or biological agents will be encountered in the course of a peacekeeping operation cannot be dismissed on technical, operational, or political grounds. While it is far from clear that parties seeking to spoil a peace operation would see clear gains from using such means, there is no confident basis to believe that they would not, even if irrational use is put aside. Residual contamination is also a possibility. The presence, or suspected presence of WMD in a region in which a peace support operation is to be conducted would raise a number of serious problems. These range from providing proper equipment, through the structure of the peace keeping forces and the rest of the peace building organization, through operational issues, to the decision-making and planning process that precedes a peace operation. Some of these can be approached by the US and other technically advanced nations as national military issues, but most bring in a much wider cast of players and several additional dimensions. These are presented primarily in the form of issues that ought to be addressed. Options for resolving these issues are left to later analyses. For the most part, these problems have received little attention. Failure to address them could have major consequences.

Introduction

The proliferation of chemical and biological (and possibly radiological) weapons to militaries and terrorist organizations has been a matter of major concern, and much attention has focussed on protecting US forces, citizens, allies and coalition partners against their effects. Analyses have included examinations of how such weapons of mass destruction (WMD) might be used for strategic purposes such as undermining coalitions or host-nation support for US military actions.

Comparatively little attention has been given to the role that weapons of mass destruction might play in the conduct of peacekeeping. This could take the form of intentional use by parties seeking to disrupt peace operations, or of residual contamination resulting from use in conflicts that preceded the introduction of peacekeepers or intervention forces. Indeed, the use of such means by one or more parties to a conflict could be a major factor leading to international intervention--either to protect civilian populations against horrific attacks, or to end the conflict before it can spread. In either event, the possible presence of WMD could have important implications for the conduct of peace operations, and for the process of deciding on and planning peace operations. The increasingly complex nature of peacekeeping operations creates large numbers of vulnerabilities, particularly to attacks that have the potential for causing

mass casualties. Experiences of the past decade have amply demonstrated that peace operations can occur in regions of relatively high technological sophistication, such as Yugoslavia, and that even in relatively primitive areas, ties can easily exist that supply belligerents with very dangerous tools. Those tools are not necessarily restricted to the generally known means of chemical and biological attack. Other means of mass destruction (MMD) such as industrial poisons and naturally occurring infections, while perhaps much less lethal than means such as nerve agents and engineered “bugs”, could nevertheless produce mass casualties and other frightening effects, particularly if their use is unanticipated. Moreover, trends are toward more, larger, and more complex peace operations as an integral part of the international security environment.

This paper finds that the threat is not negligible. It cannot be dismissed on grounds of availability of either the agents or the technological sophistication to employ them, at least not as a general proposition. The majority of proliferation analysis over the past decade and more has concluded that chemical and biological agents are within reach of essentially any determined malefactor. Parties to conflict, or potential spoilers of peace operations, could have supporters from outside the region who are willing to supply them with such means. Moreover, its existence raises a number of difficult problems that need to be addressed. Some of these are more or less unique to peacekeeping operations, while others have more in common with those being analyzed with military and counter-terrorism contexts.

Peacekeepers could encounter MMD in the form of a direct attack, as residual contamination from a conflict that preceded the peace operation, or as a deliberate impediments (i.e. analog of minefields) left behind by belligerents. The possibility that a terrorist organization having a grudge against a nation involved in peace operations, but otherwise not involved in the regional conflict, might see the deployment of peacekeepers into an unstable region as a target of opportunity ought not to be overlooked.

From the parochial perspective of US forces (or those of other technologically advanced nations) deployed in peace keeping roles, the problem may not seem all that difficult. The basic counters are developed WMD protective measures, and deterrence based on a threat of retaliation in proportion (but not in kind). Technically, this threat is likely to be much less substantial than those for which the protective measures have been designed.

However, the peacekeepers’ role encompasses much more than self protection. They are involved in providing security for local civilians, the belligerents they are separating and disarming, and a large number of civilian organizations involved in restoring essential services, a functioning society, and democratic rule. The problems encountered when discussing protecting US civilians against terrorist WMD attacks are present in expanded forms. Simply “bringing the suits” (i.e. the protective gear) will not solve problems beyond self-protection. Similarly, the deterrence value of a threat of retaliation is complicated by conditions that may make it difficult to identify the perpetrators, or to find them even if they are identified. The necessary effort may, in

effect, significantly reduce the ability of the force to conduct its primary peacekeeping duties.

Typically, peacekeeping forces are not dominated by the forces of the US and other great powers. Participating units span a broad range of equipment and training. Many of these contingents would be much more vulnerable than US forces would be. If the threat is adjudged to be real, questions of where the necessary training and equipment would come from would have to be faced. Furthermore, current analyses point to a need to be able to quickly deploy capable forces in significant strength at the outset of a peace operation. Being able to cope with a chemical and biological environment will complicate achieving this goal.

The basic question remains: is this threat sufficiently significant to warrant taking measures in response? Access to the means seems quite clear; the issue is the plausibility of use. Parties considering the use of MMD to undermine peace operations—so called “spoilers”—would probably want to consider whether they are likely to be able to cause damage that they could not inflict by conventional means, or achieve significant psychological gains, and whether those gains would outweigh whatever repercussions they might have to endure.

This paper discusses whether the threat makes sense on operational and political grounds, i.e. is the use of MMD plausible as a factor in peace operations. While it is far from clear that parties would see clear gains from using such means, there is no confident basis to believe that they would not, even if irrational use is put aside.

The paper then asks whether the possibility of MMD raises serious implications for the conduct of peace operations, and concludes that it does. These are presented primarily in the form of issues that ought to be addressed. Options for resolving these issues are left to later analyses.

If the threat is real, nations and organizations involved in peacekeeping would have to consider how to cope with the actual use, and the political problems that the threat would carry with it. These political problems would principally concern the process by which a decision is made to intervene, and the force is assembled and deployed.

Peacekeeping operations are a matter of debate and contention among nations, within the UN and other international bodies, within the US government, and probably within other national governments as well. US involvement is far from settled. This paper is not aimed at the internal US debate regarding US involvement in peace operations. Nevertheless, the issues raised have bearing on that debate. The US policy implications of those issues are likewise left to later analyses.

BACKGROUND

The nature of peacekeeping operations has been changing. Thirty years ago, peace operations were typically characterized by the presence of "blue helmet" observers whose presence helped to assure formerly hostile parties that separation agreements were being honored. For the most part, peacekeepers did not expect to be the targets of attacks, or to deal otherwise with significant hostile actions. They were, accordingly, relatively lightly armed. In recent years, peacekeeping has become more dangerous, more extensive, and more frequent.

Peace operations have also become more complex. Military peacekeeping forces are one component of multi-organizational "peace building" or "nation building" teams. These combinations of organizations are tailored for a specific operation. They typically include national components and non-governmental organizations that provide police functions, medical care and other humanitarian relief, and help in building peaceful, democratic organizations. The peacekeeping forces provide protection to these other participants, and to local inhabitants, in addition to performing functions such as enforcing disarmament of (formerly) belligerent parties. In some recent cases, the introduction of peace keepers and peace builders has been preceded by more heavily-armed intervention forces, inserted in order to bring an end to active hostilities and/or campaigns of violence against civilian populations, and to create conditions conducive to peace building.

Peacekeeping operations are multi-national affairs, usually conducted under United Nations auspices. Peacekeeping forces are usually organized and commanded by the UN. However, sometimes the UN directs that authority for conducting peace operations be assigned to another organization (e.g. NATO).

Peacekeeping is increasingly conducted in environments in which not all (formerly hostile) parties are committed to the peace process. Peacekeepers often have to deal with parties who did not agree willingly to the introduction of peacekeeping forces, and who may see the presence of peacekeepers as inimical to their interests and may seek to disrupting peace operations. Stronger parties might see international peacekeepers as an impediment to achieving their goals by aggressive military action. Others might view the UN, or that group of nations engaged in the peace operations, as being sympathetic to the opposition. Parties guilty of atrocities are not interested in the presence of forces that could unearth those actions and bring worldwide attention to them. In some cases, belligerents openly oppose the presence of peacekeepers. In others, they support peacekeeping only as temporary measures that can be exploited by them to gain advantage over their opponents. Some of these spoilers are willing to take aggressive actions to thwart the peace operations.

This evolution in the conditions under which peace operations are conducted has led to a realization that peacekeeping forces need to be sufficiently strong to prevail

under increasingly challenging conditions. Incidents in Sierra Leone, and elsewhere, in which peacekeepers were overwhelmed by local (para)military forces have led, in part, to an assessment on the part of the UN that peacekeepers must arrive with sufficient force to be able to prevail in situations in which hostilities are imposed on them. A recent high level UN report on peacekeeping recognized a need for access to greater force, and a need to speed up the process of decision, planning, and deployment once the need for peacekeepers has been recognized¹. In essence, in order to protect themselves, those involved in peace-building activities, and the inhabitants of the areas into which they are deployed while enforcing the cessation of hostilities, the UN peacekeeping forces should be structured to be the dominant military power in the immediate region of interest, and should have sufficient capability, organic and reserve, to withstand, overcome, and deter a range of threats. Consequent improvements in peacekeeping forces could be seen by those opposed to their presence as an escalatory step, leading to efforts to (re)gain a military advantage over the peacekeepers. Hostile parties could see planned improvements in peacekeeping forces as raising the ante, a move that demands a countermove.

One obvious countermove would be to increase their own military capabilities, or destructive capacity. These efforts could include attempts to obtain more lethal means of attack, including chemical and biological agents (and perhaps radiological or other nuclear means). Access to tools of mass destruction could be viewed as an attractive equalizer (or neutralizer), at least in principle.

A more sophisticated approach might be to attempt to impede the political process whereby an international consensus is formed regarding the need to intervene, a decision is reached, and the operation is planned and launched. The goal might be to delay intervention while gains are being made, limit the scope of the intervention, or even prevent it entirely.

The UN report cited above discusses the decision process in some detail, and concludes that it is currently too slow and cumbersome for reliably effective action. It recommends that the process by which peace operations are created and conducted needs to be regularized, or at least made more orderly and routine than it now is. Suggested elements include reforming the Security Council decision process and the interaction between the Council and the Secretariat, and creating standing staff and cadre structures that can be rapidly built upon when necessary to take action. Many major questions are still contentious within the UN and among its member nations. Until these are addressed, the process is likely to remain *ad hoc*, but increasingly informed by relevant experience. These questions concern matters as fundamental as what kinds of standing structures (staff, logistics, and forces) that the UN should have, what sorts of roles various types of nations should have, and what conditions can be imposed on the commitment of national forces to PKOs.

Parties to conflicts where peace enforcement and peacekeeping might be imposed generally lack the opportunity to directly influence intervention decisions that are taken

¹ Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, A/55/305-S/2000/809, 21 August 2000

in fora such as the UN Security Council. In some cases they might seek the aid or surrogates. Alternatively, they might seek to impose conditions that make the decision more difficult, such as the threat of WMD.

Proceeding from the observation that it is at least plausible that chemical, biological, and possibly radiological agents could appear in an area into which peacekeepers have been introduced, this paper examines two questions:

1. Is it plausible to think that parties could believe that they would have something to gain by actually employing such means, and that the threat of use—either rationally or irrationally motivated—should be taken seriously?
2. If the threat is real (i.e. the preceding question is answered in the affirmative), what impact might its existence have on the process by which peace operations are planned, instituted, and conducted?

The purpose in raising these questions is not to answer them definitively, but to understand whether this is an issue that is sufficiently serious to warrant further attention. These general questions are converted into more specific ones. The final section identifies some specific issues for further analysis.

Why use MMD to disrupt peace operations?

This paper primarily addresses the question of how parties to a local conflict might use means of mass destruction, the fact of their possession of such means, or even the threat that they might have such weapons or might acquire them. This leaves aside the not insignificant question of how they might credibly acquire such weapons and the knowledge necessary to store and employ them.

Before embarking on that discussion, however, it is worthwhile to consider why parties might employ means of mass destruction, i.e. what they might hope to gain. This is intended to help “scope” the problem, to generate some understanding as to how large the problem is likely to be. Such discussions can neither demonstrate that use of MMD under these circumstances is certain to occur, nor prove that such use is impossible.

To some observers, the fact that MMD exist and are within the technological, commercial, and political reach of belligerent parties might be sufficient to warrant attention. Even if there appears to be no plausible rational reason to employ such means, irrational acts cannot necessarily be ruled out.

Furthermore, constraints on the actions of parties to a conflict into which peacekeepers have been inserted might not necessarily apply to others who have an agenda not directly related to the genesis of the conflict. For example, US forces deployed in an African peace operation could be seen as a convenient target by a Middle Eastern organization that has no stake in the outcome of the peace operation, but has a goal of inflicting damage on the US. That organization could not be effectively retaliated

against in the region where their attack took place, and they might not see much disadvantage to generating ill will among the local population.

Both of these argue for at least minimal precautions on the part of US forces involved in peacekeeping operations: bring protective equipment.

There appear to be four basic threats of WMD: (1) use of WMD attacks on peacekeepers or others to spoil a peace keeping mission; (2) contamination left behind as a sort of minefield to impede operations; (3) residual contamination from a preceding conflict; and (4) use against peacekeeping forces by forces outside the region for reasons not directly related to the peace operation. All of these would require that peacekeeping forces have the wherewithal to operate in a chemical or biological environment, particularly detection, self-protection, medical care, and decontamination. To varying degrees, each requires the ability to extend protection and related services to others in the theater. However, deliberate use for purposes of spoiling a peace operation imposes the greatest, most diverse burden, and carries the most far reaching implications for the process by which peace operations are planned and conducted. If deliberate use as a spoiler is plausible, a broad spectrum of political, organizational, and procedural issues have to be faced along with the issues associated with being prepared to operate in the presence of chemical or biological agents. For example, if the only concern is residual contamination, peacekeepers need to be prepared to take self-protective measures, find the contaminated areas, isolate them, and perhaps arrange for decontamination. If an attack is possible, operational responses will include warning, as well as providing protection of some form to local populations and those involved in peace-building. The possibility that their forces may encounter attacks that produce high casualty levels is likely to affect the decisions of nations to commit forces to operations, and will therefore affect the composition of the operation and the way the operation is put into place.

Goals

A party (or parties) to a local conflict might seek to disrupt international peace operations because they see the resolution of the conflict through peace operations as not serving their interests. One way to do this is to inflict casualties, or to create a threat of violence that is sufficient to cause parties involved in peace building to withdraw from the situation.

Access to means of mass destruction can dramatically increase the ability of belligerent parties to inflict damage on peacekeeping forces and on those the peacekeepers are deployed to protect (i.e. peace builders and local residents). The term "means of mass destruction" has been intentionally chosen to cast a wider net than "weapons of mass destruction", which is usually understood to mean chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, and conjures up relatively definite images in most people's minds².

² These include chemical and biological weapons that are designed along the lines of the military weapons developed during the 20th century by the US, the USSR, and other nations; cruder "terrorist" dispersal devices for military chemical and biological agents (e.g. sprayers); nuclear explosive devices of varying

Means of mass destruction could also include "unconventional means" such as the use (or diversion) of industrial poisons, and the intentional spreading of naturally occurring infections. These means could be employed for their ability to cause mass disruption rather than destruction (e.g. deaths) *per se*. Disruption might be caused by actions such as causing epidemics of diseases with low mortality rates (but debilitating effects), contaminating significant areas or supplies, or successfully spreading the fear and perception among local populations or peace building personnel that they are at risk of exposure to lethal agents. For the remainder of this discussion the term "means of mass destruction" or "MMD" will be understood to be the equivalent of the more inclusive "means of mass destruction or mass disruption"

Operationally, these means could be used against peace operations by:

1. Inflicting high casualties on the peacekeeping forces, requiring increases in forces and causing changes in operations. High casualties could cause contributing nations to reassess the wisdom of contributing forces, and possibly withdraw their contributions at a time when commanders are calling for increases in available forces.
2. Rendering the environment too dangerous for continued activities by peace-building personnel.
3. Rendering continued participation politically untenable for some participating nations.
4. Causing a vastly increased requirement for medical care for refugees and other local civilians
5. Causing mass civilian flight by inducing civilians to believe that peacekeepers can't protect them.

Malefactors could also use MMD to cause large numbers of casualties among civilian populations. While this might not directly affect the peacekeeping operation, it would obviously be a major breach of the peace that the peacekeepers were inserted to enforce. It could undermine the reasons for having the peace operations in the first place (e.g. to prevent "ethnic cleansing", or the mass murder of one group by another). The results of such an attack would almost certainly impede the peace-building process and humanitarian relief efforts.

In some cases, spoilers may perceive advantages both in using MMD, and in being perceived as having employed MMD. However, in other cases, the consequences of recognition may be seen as a counterweight to the gains that accrue from the action itself. Spoilers might attempt to shift the blame to others. The "others" could be their political/military rivals, or forces involved in peacekeeping. Fostering a perception that peacekeepers were responsible for MMD use could undermine the credibility of the peacekeepers, or stimulate dissention among nations involved in the peacekeeping

degrees of sophistication; and explosive-based radiation dispersal devices. Inventive malefactors could find and use other chemical and biological agents, and find alternative means of delivery or dispersal. Techniques such as poisoning or denying water supplies, starvation, and inducing epidemics have been in use at least as long as history has been written.

operation. It might also sour relations between military peacekeepers and non-governmental relief organizations (NGOs).

Plausibility of MMD: inhibitory factors

Parties contemplating the use of MMD (or other means) to drive out peacekeeping forces (i.e. spoilers) would have to consider two important factors. First, they would want to avoid unnecessary risks of reprisals, or of generating a greater consensus for the insertion of more capable forces. For example, using chemical agents against the forces of the US, or NATO, or another major power, would be likely to stimulate that power to take extreme actions in retribution. Second, the party would have to consider how its use of such extreme means would affect its ability to govern were it to be successful in driving out the peacekeepers and taking advantage of that situation to win its struggle. How important this would be would depend on the nature of the conflict that the peacekeepers were inserted to end. It would be considerably different for an ethnic conflict than it would be for a purely political one. While MMD could be used to achieve the effects listed above, their use may not be the only way to do so. Since the use of MMD carries unique implications, a party seeking to achieve these effects might opt to attempt to do so using more conventional means. These unique implications can be, from the user's perspective, either positive or negative. Creating an atmosphere in which other nations are more cautious about taking actions would be, arguably, positive. Creating widespread revulsion and incentives for proportional retaliatory actions would probably be negative.

How likely local parties are to resort to WMD would depend on the political/military details of specific situations: (1) whether the conflict in question had been suppressed by outside action or suspended by mutual agreement of the local belligerent factions and whether the potential spoilers of the conflict resolution are major or minor elements of those factions; (2) what the spoiler hopes to accomplish in discouraging the peacekeeping force (a) to drive it out and resume the war; (b) to delay peace implementation to better position itself in an upcoming election; and/or (c) to maximize income from smuggling of high-value commodities to finance (a) or (b).

If conflict has been suppressed by an outside coalition of military forces, as in Somalia or Kosovo, there may be greater local incentives to disrupt the outside force than there would be if belligerents stuck in a hurting stalemate have come to their own negotiated cease-fire and transitional peace accord. In the case of outside suppression, the spoiler would be taking a potentially great risk in using means of mass destruction against the intervention forces if they resembled, say, IFOR or KFOR in relative power. It would risk making the intervention forces angry enough to take major reprisals. At the same time, it would be inviting widespread condemnation for resort to MMD, which would also generate support for reprisals on the part of the intervention forces. If the spoiler waited to strike until after the hand-off to a UN-led follow-on force, as in Somalia, then it could well sow chaos within the UN force and induce some contingents

to withdraw and others not to deploy; but use of MMD might also induce the original troop contributors to re-enter the fray against the perpetrator.

If the spoiler basically wants to drive out a peacekeeping force that is implementing a locally-agreed peace accord -- after an interval spent rebuilding its forces using smuggled resources, as the RUF has likely done in Sierra Leone, and as UNITA has almost surely done in Angola -- it could choose to employ MMD, but it could also attempt to do so without them. Since the use of MMD risks generating reprisals or a stronger international consensus against it, the same goal (i.e. driving out the peacekeepers) can be attempted with lower risk by avoiding MMD. At least in principle, that party wouldn't necessarily need MMD to achieve any of the five effects listed above.

In a case like Kosovo, where the objective of one group has been to drive out the members of other groups, the spoiler may in fact be intent on causing civilian casualties and flight, and might see MMD as an effective way to bring this about. But in doing so, it would need to take care that its strategy not blow back on its own group, physically or politically. Had the Serbs used MMD in Bosnia or Kosovo, the international reaction could well have been even stronger (although an MMD-laced environment might have increased concerns about a ground invasion).

A faction that seeks to govern a population rather than drive it out, on the other hand, might (further) damage its own legitimacy in the eyes of that population by using MMD. It might seek to avoid the opprobrium in resorting to MMD by attempting a covert campaign, or attempting to shift the blame to another party. If peacekeeping troop contingents alone were to suffer inordinate levels of sickness from exotic disease(s), their governments might well seek to pull them out, whatever the source (natural or induced). One might well deduce a deliberate (and careful) campaign to drive them out, but the forensic and epidemiological intelligence gathering needed to trace the origins of an epidemic would likely take longer than would a political decision to leave the mission.

It would probably be very difficult, however, to constrain the impact of a biological campaign to the peacekeepers. International missions typically hire thousands of local civilians to staff the operation; they mingle with military peacekeepers and civilian internationals. They more than likely abscond with a certain percentage of foodstuffs. Pre-deployment vaccination of international staff against prevalent local diseases is routine practice, as is sanitary practice against waterborne parasitic disease. Any induced disease that would have a substantial impact on international personnel would therefore probably have a substantial impact on the local population as well, without regard to ethnicity.

One might also expect that a fighting faction that had access to such capabilities would not wait until it needed to disrupt a peacekeeping operation to use those capabilities. That is, it might well tend to use them in the initial war, against opposing forces and/or their civilian supporters. It might even be such use that triggers international military intervention, in which case the intervening force would have to come in prepared to defend against and to suppress that capability. But in such a case,

the intervenors would be much more interested in mopping up the MMD users than in working them into a post-conflict peace settlement. Thus the user would have to weigh the likelihood of victory against the likelihood of forceful outside intervention.

Any follow-on PK force in such circumstances would also have to be prepared to deal with residual MMD capability. And in such a case, where there are known risks of MMD, there may well be difficulty in recruiting a follow-on force. If the original intervenors want to hand off to the UN, therefore, it would be in their interests to do as thorough a job of mopping up as possible. And some fraction of the original forces may need to remain deployed with the new force as a risk-sharing gesture.

Taken together, this all provides a rather mixed picture. Incentives and opportunities may well exist for parties to use WMD. However, serious factors argue against the wisdom of doing so, particularly when alternative means exist to achieve operational goals, or when there is a strong possibility of stimulating extreme responses that could more than reverse whatever might be gained. This is essentially the same general situation that obtains when considering the threat of encountering WMD in combat situations, or the threat of terrorist use of WMD. The threat of MMD use is one of low probability and high consequence, which argues for prudent planning.

Implications for planning and conducting peace operations

While there are clearly major disincentives to using MMD against a peace operation, one cannot rule out the possibility that MMD will be introduced into a region in which a peace operation is to be conducted, and possibly employed. The threat—whether explicit or implicit, small scale or large scale—that means of mass destruction might be present could be a tool for influencing the process of planning and deploying peacekeeping forces, and of conducting peace operations. Parties that have MMD, or claim to have access to MMD, or who may be capable of fostering an international perception that they have MMD, could have four types of opportunities to disrupt or otherwise influence peace operations. They could take advantage of the weapons themselves, or of a need on the part of the parties involved in the peacekeeping to conduct their activities in anticipation of encountering MMD. A perceived need to deal with the presence of MMD could add problems to an already complex situation.

1. Disrupt the process by which the operation is planned and the peacekeepers are deployed. This disruption might result in the operation never taking place, or being ineffectual—for example, due to insufficient force commitments—or being delayed until the party in question has had an opportunity to gain the upper hand.
2. Disrupt the operation itself, for example by defeating or thwarting the peacekeeping force whenever it attempts to do things against the party's interest. This might be accomplished by inflicting high casualties on the peacekeeping force, preventing it from transiting to a location it needs to get to or otherwise containing that force, or causing the force to devote all its efforts to its own defense.

3. Having taken advantage of the lull in the fighting created by the peacekeepers, and having used that to regain strength, force the peacekeepers out.
4. Disrupt the transition from a peace operation to peace. Make it unlikely that local democratic institutions will survive the departure of the peacekeepers. Interfere with the ability of organizations to create these institutions under the protection of the peacekeepers. Create situations that overwhelm the humanitarian relief activities that accompany peacekeeping and the transition to nation building.

Planning and deploying

The credible threat—implicit or explicit—of these means could greatly complicate the process of arranging and implementing peace operations. It would almost certainly be a factor in planning the operation, and in the decisions of individual governments to contribute forces.

Time is usually important. Actions that cause significant delays in the time required to begin peace operations could act to undermine those operations, and buy time for parties to the conflict who seek to accomplish certain goals before peacekeepers arrive to interfere. A major thrust of the recommendations of the recent UN report was that the UN ought to be taking measures that would reduce the time necessary to assemble and deploy a peacekeeping force once a crisis has erupted. These measures include improvements in headquarters staffing and the decision making process, and the establishment of a cadre command system and force that could be available rapidly. However, the bulk of the forces contributed to any operation will come from national contributions offered up at the time of need.

The prospect of facing WMD attacks would probably cause nations considering contributing forces to reconsider their actions, at least to spend more time making a decision. In the US, peace operations have always been a matter of some controversy, with less than full political support. The prospect of significant casualties would almost certainly reduce support. The situation is almost certainly similar in other democratic nations. While some, like Canada and the Scandinavian countries, have been enthusiastic participants in peace operations, others share the reluctance found in the US. Some European governments exist through a delicate domestic political balance, with defense and military questions usually being controversial. Prime Ministers and ruling party officials might be expected to consider very carefully commitments that could result in unacceptably large numbers of casualties. Even in newly democratic nations like Russia, political leaders pay attention to public reaction to military casualties that result from commitments they have made.

If peace operations are perceived as likely to occur in extraordinarily dangerous environments, these are the nations that would be best prepared to contribute, but they may not be so quick to commit themselves. Under the circumstances, the decision

process is likely to be very deliberate, and take domestic political factors strongly into account.

Overall, a substantial portion of the forces engaged in peacekeeping under UN auspices come from less developed nations. In the past, some of these forces have been much less well trained and less well equipped than are those from Europe and North America. Deficiencies have occurred in very basic areas, such as clothing. Operating in a WMD environment will require specialized equipment that these nations are not likely to have in abundance (or at all). This would raise the question of who would be responsible for providing the equipment necessary to operate in a WMD environment. Since the threat is not likely to be a sophisticated one, the equipment need not be the most advanced, but it would have to be available and sufficient to do the job. Providing individual and collective protection, as well as medical facilities, might be seen as an additional burden for the more technologically advanced nations, or at least for the richer ones. These nations may or may not be willing to foot that bill. If willing, they may seek some other form of compensation.

Additional training might also be necessary for contributed troops who have not been trained for operations in a WMD environment. This could be time consuming, and could create another burden for those in charge of the operation.

The potential presence of WMD could become another issue in negotiating participation in peace operations, slowing down the process. It could also become a factor in Security Council deliberations regarding authorizing intervention.

To the extent that belligerent parties have ties to UN member nations, slowing down the process by which a decision is reached and peacekeepers are deployed could buy time to rally political forces to oppose the decision, or to gain favorable concessions in the composition and mandate of the peacekeeping force.

Most of these considerations refer to an acute situation: the process of agreeing to an planning a peace operation in response to an existing crisis. Some of these problems could be avoided by dealing with the problem in advance, i.e. as the UN institutes needed reforms in its institutions and procedures for planning peace operations. Doing so would have implications for those reforms, including perhaps training, staffing, and equipment.

Some parties would like to see the UN have the institutions and arrangements in place that would support sending at least some peacekeeping forces within a very few weeks of a decision to do so. Having this capability inherently requires that decisions and commitments are made before hand. The prospect of facing chemical or biological attack may cause member nations to be much more cautious about committing their forces in advance.

Peace operations and the transition from peacekeeping to peace

Peacekeepers conduct a variety of functions, some of which are similar to combat functions or other operations in a conflict environment. Others are more or less unique to peacekeeping. The combat-related functions carry nuances that may place special conditions on dealing with WMD, i.e. responses that are appropriate for combat may not be so for peacekeeping operations. The other functions may require the forces to take WMD-related measures that they wouldn't have to during combat.

Successful peace operations make a transition from activities that are largely military to peace building and nation building, which are carried out primarily by non-military organizations with some military support. That transition is protected by military peacekeeping forces who create and maintain the environment in which these activities can take place.

Both war and peacekeeping missions require that forces: (1) protect themselves, their bases, and their support; (2) engage hostile opponents; and (3) disarm formerly hostile forces. Peacekeeping requires separating antagonistic parties. Peacekeepers are often charged with protecting civilian workers engaged in peace building. These workers may be from governments, the UN and other international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many are not organized in conjunction with the peacekeeping forces, and some are not enthusiastic about working with military units. The peacekeepers may also have to provide some degree of protection to local populations, displaced locals, and refugees, many of whom may be living under primitive conditions either caused by or aggravated by the conflict.

Historically, each peace operation has been unique. Each conflict has had its individual nature, and peacekeeping forces have been assembled on an *ad hoc* basis that depended in part on the conflict, and in part on a list of political factors that pertained at the time. However, as the UN report cited above indicates, this has been accompanied by a learning process and an accompanying realization that the process needs to be regularized as much as possible if it is to be effective.

In a broad sense, peace operations progress through a few general stages. The first is the insertion of peacekeeping forces. This may be as a replacement for intervention forces when the conflict has been brought under control. The peacekeepers gain control of the situation, making it safe for the introduction of humanitarian relief workers and those involved in peace building and the restoration of life-support infrastructure (i.e. food, water, power, housing, medical, etc.) and democratic governmental institutions, as well as those performing safety related functions like landmine removal and clean-up of toxic residues. Civilian security services are reconstituted and trained as necessary, and the security functions are transferred to them from the peacekeeping forces. Eventually, peacekeeping forces are reduced in size and responsibility, and subsequently withdrawn.

As the outset, inserted forces have to establish their bases and lines of communication, and their own security. Primary concern regarding WMD would be self-protection and protection of support personnel, including local employees. These are

more or less congruent with military operations, although peacekeepers may have greater reliance on civilians for support.

They would then move out to perform functions associated with separating and disarming belligerent parties. These operations would again be similar to combat operations, and could include the identification and securing of contaminated areas and suspected WMD stocks. As the aftermath of Desert Storm demonstrated, this could be difficult and dangerous. If there is good reason to suspect that one or more parties to the conflict possess MMD, incentives would be strong to capture and secure those weapons. These incentives would be even greater were the MMD to be used, or clear threat of use made. Commanders would have to decide how much capability or operational focus could be devoted to hot pursuit, and how the perpetrators would be dealt with to reduce or eliminate subsequent threats. The special conditions of peacekeeping could preclude some means that might be used in combat, particularly those that involve heavy applications of firepower. Moreover, special precautions would have to be exercised to avoid unintentional contamination, particularly in areas that are to be returned to civilian occupation (which would be almost all areas).

Operations have evolved to include the cantonment of heavy weaponry. This process could be complicated by the (suspected) presence of WMD. Contamination of surrendered equipment would be possible. If one or more parties are known to have WMD, cantonment would involve special procedures and precautions. Cantonment might not be an end in itself. It seems highly unlikely that peacekeeping forces would eventually return WMD to their owners. These weapons would likely have to be destroyed, or removed for destruction elsewhere. The inspection activities in Iraq for nearly a decade following Desert Storm have demonstrated the difficulties attendant to finding and destroying chemical and biological weapons.

The aftermath of Desert Storm has also demonstrated another issue that remains to be resolved, that of chronic illness among troops who may have been exposed to chemical and biological agents. Whether the individuals in question were actually exposed to toxic agents is still uncertain, as is the connection between exposure and symptoms. What is clear is that this has become a major controversy for the US, one which could affect the willingness of nations to contribute peacekeeping contingents, or raise the long term costs to them of participation.

Peacekeepers may have to deal with providing relief workers and local inhabitants with protection against chemical and biological agents. This could add a whole new array of problems, that would have some similarities to domestic defense and some obvious differences as well. This could generate a very large requirement for commitment of resources. In the absence of a credible defense, spoilers could use the threat of attack to disrupt peace-building activities, even if no actual attacks were to take place. Since it seems unlikely that peacekeepers will have the means to provide anything like a complete defense, the question of what this means for the conduct of peace building needs to be worked through.

Realistic threats could force the withdrawal of peace-building civilian organizations because they deem the environment to be too risky. This could result in the prolonging of the military phase of peacekeeping and the postponement of the ultimate goal. Diseases, including non-lethal diseases and naturally occurring diseases, that are intentionally introduced could impede these activities, increase the time required to effect transition measures, overwhelm emergency medical services, and possibly discourage local populations from interacting with the workers. The threat of chemical contamination could be used to impede travel.

Issues

Based on this short discussion, it seems clear that the possible presence of WMD in areas in which peacekeeping operations are conducted (or are being considered) would raise a number of problems that do not have obvious solutions, and cannot be dismissed. These problems warrant deeper analysis to ascertain how significant and deserving of attention they are, and what steps might be taken to solve them or to avoid them. In general, these include: issues concerning the military aspects of peace operations, i.e. the structure, equipping, and operations of national contingents and multi-national peacekeeping forces; issues associated with the other aspects of peace operations, and the ability of peacekeepers to protect those involved in those activities as well as the local population and refugees; issues associated with the ideas, analyses, and recommendations of the recent UN report concerning the organizational and decision-making aspects of UN peacekeeping activities. A list of such issues follows.

1. **Threat characterization** At one level, the fact of WMD is more significant than the specifics of the threat. However, if operational counters are and responses are to be used, more specificity is needed. What are the most likely WMD threats that would confront peacekeepers, i.e. the agents that they might be expected to face (including industrial chemicals and diseases not usually associated with bio-warfare programs)? It would be useful to extend proliferation studies to understand the paths that might be used to bring WMD into regions where peacekeepers might be inserted. It would also be useful to study the question of how spoilers might seek to use WMD, in particular what their goals might be and how they might be expected to go about pursuing those goals.

Are there any unique threat problems that may occur during peace operations that would not be of concern in combat? The use of relatively unsophisticated agents and delivery means, as well as employment aimed more at political and media impact than actually killing, may raise problems that militaries have not spent much time dealing with. At another level, the use of WMD for genocide or "ethnic cleansing" cannot be discounted.

Analytical attention has focussed on WMD in the hands of combatants and terrorists. How they would be expected to employ WMD is assumed to be tied to what they would be seeking to accomplish by doing so. Those seeking to spoil peace

operations might have yet a different set of goals, which might in turn lead them to different means of employment. Assessments of combatant use of WMD is based on a large body of military analysis, a long history of warfare, and even some experience. Terrorist use of WMD is less well understood. There is little actual data to support analyses, despite the fact that terrorists have been around for quite a while. The concept of peace operations, and of “spoilers” of peace ops, is a much more recent phenomenon, and even more poorly understood. However some insights can be brought to bear from studies of combat and terrorists, and of tyrants who have used mass slaughter against their unruly subjects. Indeed, some peace operations are conducted because of the proclivities of some parties to domestic disputes to pursue their goals through mass murder.

Despite many similarities, there are differences—demonstrated and potential—between spoilers and either military forces or terrorists. For example, terrorists often seek to gain advantage through letting their victims know they can attack with impunity; terrorist usually--although not always--take credit for their work. Spoilers would seek to disrupt a peace operation in order to gain from its failure. They would not necessarily gain from advertising that they were responsible for the failure of the peace operation. They could well see a disadvantage in being associated with WMD attacks against peacekeepers. It is at least plausible that a peace operation could be disrupted by WMD attacks the perpetrators of which could not be readily identified, or at least could not be identified with enough certainty to take retaliatory actions.

2. **Intelligence** Are there special problems associated with obtaining intelligence for strategic warning or tactical warning of WMD employment during peace operations? How would warning be achieved? What intelligence assets would the US have to commit to this problem that it might not otherwise have to commit to a peace operation? The specific nature of the threat may have significant implications for the methods employed for intelligence, detection, and warning. It is not necessarily true that the methods that have been developed for applications in major military actions would be the most useful in peacekeeping. For example, hand-held detectors may be more useful than much more capable systems mounted on UAVs. Moreover, the very sophisticated systems are likely to be in short supply and therefore not always available; the same could be said of maintenance and support of these systems. It might be reasonable to ask whether unconventional, multinational means might be used to obtain needed information.

What capabilities would be available to peacekeeping forces? Who would provide them? What tools could be available for near real time assessment and decision support?

3. **Force Protection** What would US forces assigned to peacekeeping operations have to take with them for self-protection (i.e. protection of the force, individual and collective self-protection, not to provide protection beyond the US force)? This is probably a subset of what has been developed for combat applications. Are there any unique needs for self-protection in peace operations, i.e. needs that would not be present in combat?

4. **Compatibility of WMD precautions with other Peace keeping Needs** Are there issues of compatibility of WMD precautions with other needs related to peacekeeping such as minimal force, or non-lethal weapons, or small unit operations in close proximity to civilians? Do the (operational) needs associated with precautions against WMD attack conflict with special aspects of peace operations, i.e. all those things that peacekeepers do that are not done (or not done the same way) in combat? How would a known threat of MMD attack affect the ability of a peacekeeping force to manage a civilian population and maintain order?

5. **National Contributions and the Structure of Multinational Forces** One of the major issues facing UN planners is how to provide, in an orderly way, for all the different capabilities that are necessary for the conduct of a major peace operation. Since these largely come from the member nations on a contributory basis, advance planning is required, advance planning that takes into account both the different levels of capabilities that nations have, and the political nature of the situation—specifically that a decision to contribute forces cannot be taken for granted in advance. A *de facto* division of sorts has been evolving in which large powers (e.g. US, Russia, UK, France, NATO) provide modern combat capabilities when that is deemed necessary, committed smaller modern powers such as Canada and the Scandinavian nations contribute well-trained and well-equipped experienced peacekeepers and some specialized capabilities, and third world nations contribute large number of soldiers, often ill-trained and ill-equipped. The need to deal with WMD will put new demands on this system. WMD capabilities vary very widely among nations. A need may evolve for specialized units that provide CW/BW defensive capabilities to other peacekeepers and to local populations and non-military organizations.

What are the implications for the composition of peacekeeping forces? Will the list of participants be narrowed down to those nations that are appropriately equipped and trained? Some experienced peacekeepers have taken the position that, even in the absence of a WMD problem, the division of labor among nations should be re-examined. Some argue that ill-equipped third world nations should not be invited to participate, and that the great powers should be involved only when a heavy military presence is needed. If the current situation continues, there will be an issue of the provision of protection and training to forces that do not come with the proper equipment and training. Who provides? Who pays? Would there be any value in the US developing equipment to be provided to other peacekeeping forces, either as a contribution or for a fee? What are the implications for the willingness of those nations that have traditionally provided most of the peacekeepers to continue to make contributions?

6. **Effect of a WMD Attack on Peacekeepers** In the past, peacekeepers have taken casualties, but nothing approaching what could result from a chemical or biological attack. What effect would such an attack have on the conduct of an intervention? Would it hold together? How might contributing nations react? Might they withdraw their forces? How might the multinational and national commanders on the scene react? How might follow-on actions be conducted? What problems would the UN face in keeping the

operation going? Using less lethal means, spoilers have humiliated peacekeepers and undermined their credibility. In some cases, contributing nations have sent in greater force to aid their nationals (e.g. the UK in Sierra Leone), causing friction with other nations involved in the operation. Are there dangers that national commanders (or higher national authorities) would respond with severe retaliatory actions that further undermine the peace operation? How might such actions be prevented or mitigated?

7. **Protection of non-military participants and local civilians** The protection of civilian populations, international organization personnel, members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and employees of civilian government agencies has to be worked through in some detail. How might spoilers use (or credibly threaten to use) WMD against non-military participants in peace building? Against refugees and local population? How would this affect the conduct of the peace operation? WMD, especially biological agents used in a refugee camp, would be catastrophic. And given NGO reluctance, in particular, to become associated with military forces, military forces alone may be very limited in what they can do to prevent either an attack or its consequences. Refugees have been targets of warring parties, for example in Rwanda/Zaire, and now in Sierra Leone/Guinea. Camps also provide a sea of potential hostages to somebody who could pose a crude bio threat, for example by contaminating a water supply. Controlled contamination that is difficult or impossible to stop might be seen as a bargaining tool.

8. **Implications for structure of peace operation** How might the possibility that WMD would be used against either non-military participants or against the local population affect the overall structure of the peace operation? Are there added capabilities (e.g. medical, HAZMAT) that might be included in the structure? If so, where would they come from? Will it be necessary to develop a civilian "WMD/Hazmat Defense for Peace Ops" capability. This could be very costly.

9. **Deterrence** What measures might be taken to deter the use of WMD? What can the peacekeepers, or the UN, let be known that would act to inhibit WMD use by potential spoilers? These might include both military and political measures. The whole question of deterrence becomes extremely difficult, and reprisal is usually not part of peacekeeping. Reprisal might not be practical if, for example, the WMD event is localized and only hits the local population, and the attackers are shadowy guerrillas who own the forest, or if attribution is otherwise uncertain.

It is reasonable to assume that a major power—the US, Russia, France, etc.—would want to take strong reprisals against any party that caused large casualties against their peacekeeping forces. Doing so would necessitate identifying a target against which to take such reprisals. If the perpetrator is a guerilla force that is well dispersed, this may not be all that easy to do. The US experience of reprisals against high profile terrorist attacks has been very mixed. Sometimes the reprisals themselves can be used for political advantage by hostile parties. The experience of the Israelis has been similar, and much more extensive.

Provoking brutal reprisals by a force sent in to keep the peace could be a tool for undermining the legitimacy of the peacekeeping force and causing popular resentment to it. For example, were a chemical attack on an isolated US camp to result in a US campaign across a large area, the local population could well see only the reprisals, particularly in a region in which the news media have been destroyed.

10. **Pre-existing contamination** How would the presence of contamination—more likely chemical than biological—from a conflict that preceded the peace operation affect the conduct of the peace operation? The scenario regarding PK where WMD has been used in war, and the refugee camp security/public health angle, could be especially important items to investigate. To a degree, the UN has already had to deal with the first problem, inasmuch as a thousand or so UN observers were posted on the Iran-Iraq border and probably in/near its chemical battlefields after that war ended (pulling out only when Desert Storm was on the verge of being launched). But the UN has never had to stage a complex operation, that is, one in a post-civil war situation, involving prior use of WMD. In that case, the civilians in the operation as well as the military would need to be WMD-smart.

11. **Inhibiting Introduction** Are there measures that might be taken to increase the difficulty to bringing MMD into an area in which there is a peace operation? This, of course, would not affect a threat from materials that were introduced into a region before an operation was begun.

12. **Finding and Eliminating WMD** To some extent, peacekeepers will control a region. Are there measures that they can take to find chemical and biological agents within the region and to gain control over or eliminate them? Might inspections analogous to UNSCOM be structured into a peace operation?

13. **Structuring UN Peacekeeping efforts** The recent high level UN report was meant to provide a basis for a major restructuring of the peacekeeping process as focussed through the UN. It seems worthwhile to ask whether the findings and recommendations might be reviewed and revised in light of the possibility of having to take into account an environment in which MMD might be present.